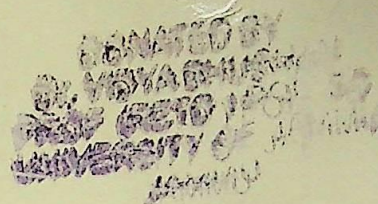
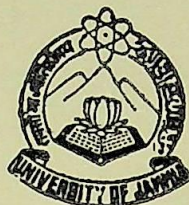


JAMMU AND KASHMIR STATE AND CENTRAL ASIA— POLITICAL RELATIONS 1857—1947



**ABSTRACT OF Ph. D. THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE
UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU**

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A B S T R A C T

Research Design

Establishment of British Paramountcy in India in the beginning of 19th century, gradually opened the way for Great Britain to widen its scope of political influence in Asia and the Far East. Nineteenth century marked the emergence of Russia on Asian scene as a major power to be reckoned with.

The imperialists were motivated by two primary interests during this period, viz. physical expansion and commercial gains. In classical theory of colonialism, the policy of 'divide and rule' remained effective, with the difference of degree and the modes of implementation in their respective spheres. The effective progress of colonialism and imperialism in the Asian continent at this point of time, depended on, among other things, the ability of imperialists to present themselves as the benefactors of the colonized people by brandishing the available gains of scientific and technological advancement in Europe, and their absence in Asiatic countries. In particular, imperialists coveted the wealth of raw material with which the Asiatic countries abounded and which they managed to utilize for their own economic gains..

Most of the Asian countries in 18/19th century presented an unhappy picture of weak and conservative states usually at loggerheads with one another and bogged down in territorial, ethnic, religious and other rivalries. The prospect of presenting a united front to the intruding imperialists was out of question. In fact, their mutual rivalries were adequately exploited by the imperialists invariably because this was instrumental in bringing about a divide among them. Thus we find that in the middle of the 19th century, the Khanates in Central Asia were locked in bitter mutual dissensions and rivalries which facilitated Russian occupation of their territories and extension onwards to the south. In the same manner, the British in India brought about disunity among Indian princely states, and, in final analysis, succeeded in establishing their sway over the whole of India before the close of the 19th century.

In this Asiatic scenario of mid 19th century, the region which served as watershed between the two rival powers was the entire northern mountaineous belt; from Alborz in the north of Iran to Hindu Kush to the north of Afghanistan and then eastwards to the Pamirs and Karaskoram ranges of the Great Himalayas. Such was the intensity of rivalry between the two that they determined to brave the hardships of the most difficult terrain in the world and to hazard adveturous military and intelligence operations. The story of these

political moves has not remained untold, no doubt, but has been said only in piecemeal. Perhaps one comprehensive analysis of political rivalries and perceptions of the entire region may not be possible because of innumerable local and regional issues. However, several attempts have been made as piecemeal studies and these have adequately unveiled the political events in the parts of the region.

The creation of the State of Jammu & Kashmir in 1846 was the direct result of the long-drawn rivalry between the aforesaid two powers. In the period under discussion, from British side, creation of Kashmir as an independent state was not an isolated event, rather a link in the chain of wider imperialist policy of Great Britain in Asia. British intervention in Afghanistan in the later part of the 19th century in the shape of three Afghan wars was indeed an essential part of British thrust towards the north. This resulted in the destabilization of Afghanistan as a sovereign state. British policy towards the State of Jammu & Kashmir onwards of 1846 has to be viewed from the same angle. We have already said that whereas the objectives of the British were the same in the case of Himalayan buffers, yet their methods and modes of treatment and operation differed.

Geopolitical situation of the State of Jammu & Kashmir under Dogra rule was one in which three imperatives

tried to outstrip one another. These were:

- (a) Britain's urge to block Russian advance south of Himalayan watershed.
- (b) Russia's urge to penetrate the Himalayan watershed and destabilise the British in India.
- (c) The urge of the Dogra rulers to refuse to serve a buffer between the two by demanding from British the safeguards for their sovereign status.

In this tripartite clash of interests, it was but natural that the Dogra rulers would, in some measure, explore the possibility of conveniently establishing friendly relations with Russia through the instrumentality of Central Asian Khanates of Bukhara and Khokand (the Khanate of Khiva being too far away to be approached). Obviously, the State of Jammu and Kashmir was severally handicapped in realizing its objective stated above. As such, ground realities demanded very subtle political moves often left to the care of missions disguised as commercial ones.

The present study seeks to probe into the entire gamut of the nature and conduct of political relations which took shape between the State of Jammu and Kashmir and Central Asia in the background of overbearing geopolitical scenario that has been profiled above.

Research Methodology

In an endeavour to effect the working relationship, a suitable fusion of historical and analytical approach has been made in this study.

So far as the nature of the research problem is concerned, the use of historical approach towards the realization of the objectives of this work could not be avoided. The historical aspect, however, has been covered with the study and interpretation of original documents like official notes, letters, memoranda, treaties, casual reports and the record files available in the National Archives, New Delhi, Calcutta, and Jammu and Srinagar archives. The published material - pamphlets, journals, press-notes, newspapers, (Published in India and abroad) were also consulted.

During the course of examining the historical documents as mentioned above, emphasis has been placed on their critical analysis to bring forth the objective interpretation of the records.

In short, for this study, reinterpretation of political moves and decisions in the light of various constraints and imperatives has been the significant part of our research methodology.

The Plan of Study

The main body of this study comprises five chapters. Besides, it contains introduction, annexures, tables and maps in support of the analysis and findings.

Table of Contents

Chapter I	Geopolitical Overview of Jammu & Kashmir
Chapter II	Kashmir Kingdom and Central Asia
Chapter III	Dogra Rule and the British Indian Paramountcy
Chapter IV	J&K State and Central Asia
Chapter V	British - Dogra Controversy
Chapter VI	Findings and Conclusion

Brief Details of Chapterization

Chapter I entitled "GEOPOLITICAL OVERVIEW OF JAMMU & KASHMIR" attempts to present the physical setting of J&K State in the Himalayan region. The purpose is to bring out physical linkages between Kashmir and Central Asia over the lofty mountains, the trade routes and passes which could have been used by any military adventurer from the south or the north. It seemed that the two imperialist powers stationed across the Himalayan watershed continued to look into each others eyes through these mountains and passes as potent rivals.

Chapter II entitled "KASHMIR KINGDOM AND CENTRAL ASIA" traces political and commercial relations which existed between Kashmir, an independent sovereign state, and Central Asia from the times of the Sultans of Kashmir (A.D. 1339) to A.D. 1850, a span of five hundred years. During this period relations between the people of the two areas continued developing and with the result that their impact remained for a long time to come. This can help in understanding the basis on which new structure of relationship could have been possibly built when Kashmir once again emerged as a sovereign state after the Treaty of Amritsar overcoming the era of political disintegration and the resultant domination by the Mughals, the Afghans, and the Sikhs from 1856 to 1846.

Chapter III entitled "DOGRA RULE AND BRITISH INDIAN PARAMOUNTCY" deals with the territorial and legal formation of the State of J&K under the Dogras during the British paramountcy. The chapter discusses in detail the nature of the sovereignty of Dogra rulers vis-a-vis the British Paramount power. Were the Dogras sovereign in theory or in practice? How did they try to defend their sovereignty from erosion? To what extent were the British ready to concede their sovereign status in full or in part? How the British tried and succeeded in undermining the sovereign status of the Dogras, and particularly in their foreign policy? Attempt has been made to discuss these matters. The discussion takes

into its purview largely the constitutional and legal aspects of the case.

Chapter IV entitled "J&K STATE AND CENTRAL ASIA" is, in a sense, the centre-piece of the whole thesis. It recapitulates Anglo-Russian rivalry in Central Asia in 19th century and its fallout in local Indian politics. It brings out the real imperialistic intentions of the British in gradually eroding the sovereignty of the Dogra rulers. The chapter emphasises two main aspect:

- (a) efforts of Dogra rulers to forge close relations with Russian agencies through the Central Asian Khanate link including the principalities of Kashghar and Yarkand.
- (b) Great Britain's relentless efforts to sabotage these overtures of the Dogra rulers.

The chapter also brings out the policy of resorting to the exchange of secret missions to and from Central Asia thereby helping deepen the political crisis in Kashmir, a manifestation of which is the episode of forged letter of Maharaja Pratap Singh.

Chapter V entitled "BRITISH - DOGRA CONTROVERSY", is in a sense, supplementary to Chapter IV with the significance that

it brings into focus the direct political decision of the British regarding the creation of Gilgit Agency as the British military outpost at the northern gate of India. Creation of Gilgit Agency in the second decade of 20th century had a purpose with different dimensions for the British. The Bolshevik revolution took place in Russia in 1917, and the British were now apprehensive of a new threat far more potent than the physical threat posed by the Czarist Russia. It was the rise of the ideology of communism which having surfaced in Russian territories, soon engulfed the entire Central Asia, other countries or nations of the world apart.

With India attaining independence in 1947, situation in Kashmir changed fast and with the accession of the State with the Indian Union in 1947, Indian troops moved to northern frontiers of Kashmir where their adversary was Russia but the newly carved state of Pakistan which forcibly occupied Gilgit and its adjoining areas.

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